

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1398

UNCLAS CARACAS 13529

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG PINT VE

SUBJ: OPPOSITION PARTIES BOYCOTT PETROLEUM NATIONALIZATION
CEREMONIES

1. COPEI, MEP, AND THE URD HAVE PROHIBITED THEIR PARTY MEMBERS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE NATIONALIZATION CEREMONIES SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 1 AT ZUMAQUE NO. 1 OIL WELL AT MENE GRANDE IN THE STATE OF ZULIA. MAS HAS LEFT PARTICIPATION UP TO EACH INDIVIDUAL PARTY MEMBER BUT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT MAS LEADERS MAY ATTEND ONLY IN THEIR CAPACITY AS TRADE UNION OF STUDENT LEADERS, NOT AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PARTY. THE COPEI BOYCOTT OF THE NATIONALIZATION CEREMONIES INCLUDES EX-PRESIDENT RAFAEL CALDERS WHO HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL ABIDE BY HIS PARTY'S DECISION. COPEI'S OSWALDO ALVAREZ PAZ, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, WILL PARTICIPATE AS ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS.

2. THE OPPOSITION ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NATIONALIZATION CEREMONY WAS SUMMED UP BY COPEI WHICH DESCRIBED THE IMPENDING FESTIVITIES AS JUST ANOTHER "ROMERIA BLANCA" (THE ANNUAL AD PARTY RALLY) SUCH AS, ACCORDING TO COPEI, TOOK PLACE AT THE IRON ORE NATIONALIZATION ON JANUARY 1, 1975. THE OPPOSITION HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT SUPPORTS NATIONALIZATION ITSELF AND THAT ITS BOYCOTT IS LIMITED TO WHAT IT REGARDS AS A HIGHLY POLITICIZED NATIONALIZATION CEREMONY. THE OPPOSITION IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL

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OF THE PERSONAL GLORIFICATION OF PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES

PEREZ WHICH IS ANTICIPATES WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE CEREMONY.

3. COMMENT. PETROLEUM NATIONALIZATION IS SACROSANCT IN
VENEZUELAN POLITICS BUT THE DETAILS OF NATIONALIZATION WILL
BE THE BREAD AND BUTTER OF VENEZUELAN POLITICS FOR YEARS TO COME.
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